



# Department of Public Health LRN Laboratory

\*\*\*Health Advisory Update\*\*\*

03/03/2020

## MAYOR

Dee Margo

## 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) DPH LRN Laboratory Specimen Submission

### Guidelines for El Paso County Healthcare Facilities

DPH LRN Laboratory will now be performing COVID-19 PCR testing. Below are the guidelines for specimen submission.

## CITY COUNCIL

### District 1

Peter Svarzbein

### District 2

Alexsandra Anello

### District 3

Cassandra Hernandez

### District 4

Dr. Sam Morgan

### District 5

Isabel Salcido

### District 6

Claudia L. Rodriguez

### District 7

Henry Rivera

### District 8

Cissy Lizarraga

## CITY MANAGER

Tommy Gonzalez

1. Health care providers must contact **El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH)** immediately if the facility has a patient under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19. The contact information is at the end of this document.
2. DPH Epidemiology (EPI) will coordinate the investigation and determine whether COVID-19 testing is approved. If it is approved, the EPI will fill out the “Interim 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) patient under investigation (PUI) form” and notify DPH Laboratory of COVID-19 testing approval
3. **Three specimens** types must be collected for each patient: 2 upper respiratory (*e.g.*, nasopharyngeal swab and oropharyngeal swab collected on swabs with a synthetic tip and an aluminum or plastic shaft in viral or universal transport media), 1 lower respiratory (*e.g.*, sputum, bronchoalveolar lavage [2-3 mL], tracheal aspirate[2-3 mL]) Each **specimen** must have:
  - a. DPH Laboratory Submission Form
  - b. CDC Form 50.34
4. Maintain proper infection control when collecting specimens. Review CDC Biosafety Practice Guidelines for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/lab-biosafety-guidelines.html>.
5. Store specimens at 2-4°C promptly after collection. Samples can be sent to the DPH Laboratory at 2-4°C if they will be received **within** 72 hours. Samples that will be received **after** 72 hours must be frozen at -70°C. Notify DPH Laboratory before delivering samples. Samples can be received M-F 8-5 PM. **For weekends and holidays, please call DPH Epidemiology.** Delivery windows for weekends and holidays will be coordinated with DPH EPI and Laboratory between 10:30 am – 11:30 am. Please follow proper shipping protocols for Category B specimens. The laboratory delivery address is listed at the end of this document.

### Robert Resendes – Public Health Director

Department of Public Health | 5115 El Paso Dr. | El Paso, TX 79905  
O: (915) 212-0200 | Email: ResendesR@elpasotexas.gov





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#### 6. Specimen rejection criteria include:

- a. Incomplete specimen submission form or specimen label
- b. Inappropriate specimen type
- c. Insufficient specimen volume
- d. NP and OP swabs collected with calcium alginate or cotton tips with wooden shafts
- e. Specimens not received at the proper temperature (i.e., refrigerated between 2-4°C or frozen on dry ice at -70°C)

#### 7. Testing results will be sent to EPI and the submitting facility. Any presumptive positive samples will be sent to the CDC for confirmatory testing.

For more information please visit:

[www.EPHealth.com](http://www.EPHealth.com)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html)

### Contact Information

#### Epidemiology Program

Disease Reporting Hours:

24 hours a day / 7 days a week

915-212-6520

#### DPH Laboratory

Specimen Delivery and Shipment

ATTN: DPH LRN Laboratory

4505 Alberta Ave. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

El Paso, TX 79905

Phone: 915-212-0438

Fax: 915-212-0439

#### Categories of urgency levels

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

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